

A SERMON

PREACHED AT

St. PAUL'S COVENT-GARDEN

Upon *Sunday* the Second of *December*, 1694.

Being the Day Appointed by Their Majesties

FOR A

Publick **THANKSGIVING**

For the Preservation of His Majesty from the
Dangers to which his Royal Person was
exposed during his late Expedition; and
for his safe Return to his People, and for
the Success of his Forces by Sea and Land.

Publish'd at the Request of the Parishioners.

By *JOHN SWYNFEN*, Chaplain to the Right
Honourable the Earl of *Bradford*, and Lecturer at
St. Magnus Church at the Bridge Foot.

IMPRIMATUR.

Decemb. 14.

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TO THE
PARISHIONERS
OF
Covent-Garden.

Gentlemen,

THE ensuing Discourse was not composed with any Design to be made Publick, and therefore wanteth that Correctness of Stile, and, perhaps too, that strict Coherence of Reasoning it ought otherwise to have had. For which Reasons I ought in Prudence to have contented my self with that great Candor, wherewith you were pleased to receive it, and not to have run this needles Risque of exposing it to a more strict Examination. But I was rather willing

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

ling to Oblige you, by complying with your Requests in this particular, than be studiously careful for lesser matters. And besides the Design of it being truly Good, namely, to Vindicate the Providence of God, and to Assert its Influence in our late Happy Revolution, I would hope it may not be altogether useleß. That it may obtain this End, is, and (by the Grace of God) always shall be the Hearty Prayer of,

Gentlemen,

Your most Humble and

Faithful Servant,

JOHN SWYNFEN.

ERRATA.

Page 3. line 3. for then read it. pag. 7. l. 7. for after read often. pag. 23. l. 3. read unexpected.

Ezekiel

Ezekiel XX. 44.

And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my Name-sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye House of Israel, saith the Lord.

THese words having no great dependance upon the Context, to Discourse thereupon would be wholly needless: You may take the sense of them in this double Paraphrase; Ye shall acknowledge my Deity and Providence, when, by freeing you from your present Slavery, I shall desist from punishing you as your sins have deserved: Or else thus; The Deliverance from your *Babylonish* Captivity, which I design to effect, is, not that you could lay any claim to it upon account of your Righteousness, for alas, your ways are wicked, and your doings corrupt, but only for my own Name-sake. The sense is but little varied either ways, only the former shews what is the positive cause of their Deliverance, *viz.* the Holy Name of God; and the latter affirms that

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their Merit had no influence in procuring it : Either ways they afford these two Observations.

1. First, That a very wicked People may sometimes be delivered from great Calamities purely for God's own Name-sake.
2. That the End or Design of such Deliverances is, that they who receive them should acknowledge the Being and signal Providence of God therein. *And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought, &c.* This People of *Israel* were not only as wicked as any upon Earth, but had moreover Ingratitude as an extraordinary Circumstance, which aggravated their Guilt beyond that of the whole World besides ; and their present Servitude in a Foreign and Barbarous Country had been so far from producing their Amendment, that it had added one sin more, which they had newly learnt from the *Chaldeans*, namely, to *make their Sons and Daughters to pass through the fire to their Idols*, as may be seen, *ver. 31st.* And yet as bad, Ungrateful, and Idolatrous as they were, they are here assured not only that for God's Holy Name-sake they should be redeemed from their present Slavery, but that after they were so, they should know that God was the Lord.

Now because the first of these Propositions is Paradoxical, that is, is opposite to the Vulgar Notions of Providence, and indeed to that Method

Methods which God seems to have told us in Scripture he will take with a wicked People, 'twill be necessary to be more particular in proving ~~them~~.

In Discoursing therefore upon the first, I shall first prove it true from Scripture. 2dly, Confirm it by producing some Instances when it may be to the Interest of God's Name to deliver a very sinful People from great Calamities. 3. I shall shew what Improvements such a People are to make of such Deliverances.

And first, that a very sinful People may sometimes be delivered from great Calamities purely for God's Holy Name, appears from two passages in this Prophecy which affirm it. See *ver. 9th.* of this Chapter, *But I wrought for my Name-sake, that it should not be polluted among the Heathen, with whom they were, but I made my self known to them in bringing them forth out of the Land of Egypt :* The place explains it self, telling us, that the Reason why the wicked Israelites were Redeemed from their Egyptian Slavery, was for God's own Name-sake. A like passage to this we have in *Chap. 36. ver. 29.* *But I had pity for my Holy Name, which the House of Israel had profaned among the Heathen, whither they went.* Whether this speaks of the same Deliverance from the Captivity in Babylon which the Text does, or of some other, is no matter, seeing it's plain 'tis here said to be wrought purely out of

pity to God's own Name : Hence it is that in several Prayers mentioned in Scripture, that were made for the Deliverance of a wicked People out of this or the other Extremity, this Motive is frequently used, that God would do it for his own Name-sake ; as in that, *Arise, O Lord, for the Glory of thy Name, pity thy People, and Sheep of thy Pasture.* From which Instances, and many more that might be produced, the thing appears to be true enough.

So that the principal Matter will be to shew some Instances wherein God's Holy Name may be concerned to deliver even a very sinful People out of great Calamities.

1. And here the first is, when the Doctrines and Worship of this People are Pure, Orthodox, and such as are agreeable to the Rules of Christianity ; when their Faith and Discipline are both right, so that they make a very considerable part of the Visible Church ; and their depravedness in Morals is so far from being justified by the Principles they profess, that, on the contrary, nothing is more strictly enjoined by their Principles than Piety and uprightness of Life. Indeed this is the first, and most absolutely necessary Ingredient to Interest the Name of God for the Deliverance of a wicked People. For as to those who have either no Christian Faith or Worship at all, or so corrupt, that

'tis as bad or worse than none, so that they are neither parts of the Visible nor Catholick Church; for such as these, I say, to fall into the extreamest Misery, without any Deliverance from it, is no Reflection at all upon God Almighty; seeing that he has never made any Covenant with or Promise to them that he will appear on their behalf; nay, he hath rather testified the contrary, namely, *That he will pour out his wrath upon such Heathen as know him not, and upon such Families as call not on his Name.* So that how far soever common Providence may be concerned upon account of their being Creatures, to free them from utter Misery in this Life, 'tis very plain that his Holy Name is not at all interested in the matter.

But now that it may be sometimes concerned to deliver a Church or Nation, whose Faith, Profession, and Worship are good and true, though the Practices of its Members are wicked, is equally plain too: For seeing such Faith and Worship are considerable Duties, and must therefore render those that have them amiable in the sight of God, how can he evidence his Respect to them unless it be by some such Temporal Deliverances? Besides, if this Church be of large extent, utterly to erase it from the face of the Earth, is scarce consistent with the Promises that are made of its Amplitude in the latter days, and that God will in
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all Places have some that shall fear and serve him ; nay, such severe proceedings against a People that retain so much of Religion as an Orthodox Faith and Regular Worship amount to, would Prejudice the rest of the World against that true Faith which they profess ; for seeing 'tis Natural, though unjust, to judge of the Truth or Falshood of any Religion by the good or bad Fortune its Professors have in the World, like the *Barbarians* instantly concluding *Paul* to be an ill Man, when they saw the Poisonous Viper on his Hand ; where Men see the hard Fate of such a People, they instantly conclude that the Religion they Profess cannot be good, seeing it could not save them from Ruine. In fine, by how much the sounder Mens Religion is, so much the better do they expect to fare ; and when Strangers see the hard Fate that hath befallen People of such a Belief, they will be so far from espousing it, that they'll think they cannot stand at too great a distance from it. So that as much as God's Holy Name is concerned to be respectful to Men of sound Belief and Regular Worship, to Propagate the true Faith in all parts and corners of the Earth, and to make the Enemies to, to become Professors of and in love with it, so much it may be concerned to deliver such a People out of the Calamities into which they are fallen. And we are to observe, that this was that very thing which

which so long preserved the *Israelites* from utter Ruine. Though their Morals was corrupt even beyond Example, and their very Worship too frequently stained with Idolatry, yet in the other Substantial Principles, both of Faith and Discipline, they being still sound, though God Almighty for their sins did often reduce them to the very brink of Destruction, yet for the sake of the other he did as often deliver them from falling into it. Hence when the *Psalmist* makes Confession of their Miscarriages, and owns them to be so great, as to Merit an utter Extirpation, he adds this, *Yet they are thy People, and Sheep of thy Pasture*; and urges this as a Motive with God, that he would not utterly destroy them.

2. When amongst this wicked People there are a considerable number that are truly Good, then may the Holy Name of God be concerned to deliver them from the Calamities into which they are fallen; especially if the better sort are like to suffer most, and those that are more wicked may extricate themselves; for, as God may think, why should the Righteous suffer for the sins of the Wicked? The Innocent bear the Punishment of the Guilty? Or good Men endure those Miseries which they had no hand in procuring? This would be to separate Guilt from Fault; and whereas
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he himself has told us, that the Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him, 'twould be to act counter and opposite thereto, especially in the latter case, where bad Men escape, and the truly Pious only suffer: For this would expressly verifie the Jewish Proverb, *That the Fathers have eaten four Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are set on edge*; nay, it would be worse than so, in as much as 'tis less Injustice to suffer for the Faults of Relations, than for those we were never related to. Indeed if for Ten Righteous Persons he would have saved *Sodom*, and that he professeth he could not do what he designed whilst *Lot* was in it; where there are an infinitely greater number of good People, we may reasonably presume he will not destroy the Country they live in for their sake. And lastly, if the Righteous shall not bear the Lot of the Wicked, nor bad Men escape, leaving the good to suffer in their stead, then those Calamities where the contrary to this would certainly happen, the Holy Name of God seems concerned to prevent.

3. The Holy Name of God seems concerned to deliver a Wicked People, that yet are of the true Religion, from utter Destruction, where the Establishment of a much more Wicked People,
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and of a false Religion too, would be the consequent of it: For this would be to change bad for worse, to take away a little Evil, and introduce a greater; and like the Demoniack, of whom we read in the Gospel, out of whom one Devil was cast, and seven Devils worse than the former entered into him. Seeing therefore that such proceedings as these would be so far from lessening, that they would abundantly propagate Irreligion, Heresie, and Sin, the Honour of God's Name seems concerned to avoid them. To this very Reason it may be are we of this Church and Nation obliged for that Deliverance which we this day gratefully Celebrate. Though with *Israel* in the Text, *our ways are wicked, and our doings corrupt*, so that we justly merit even an utter Extirpation; nay, though we publish our sins as *Sodom*, and seem to vye with the Old World for all manner of Profaneness; so that to palliate or excuse our Guilt, would not only much aggravate it, but likewise be the ready way to bring worse Judgments on our Heads than those we have already escaped; yet surely, compared with those that must in all probability succeed us, 'twill not be criminal or assuming for once to make the *Pharisee's* claim, thanking God that we are not so bad as they. At least this we are sure of, that no kind of Impieties are justified by the Rules of our Religion, as there are by the Rules of theirs. We maintain not,

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That for the safety of a Man's Honour or Good Name, 'tis Lawful for him to kill or defame another ; That in the case of Necessity we may justifiably steal ; That Fornication is not evil in it self ; That if I assert or swear what is false, so that I mean not as I say, that I am neither guilty of Lying or Perjury ; That 'tis Lawful for a Servant, not having Wages answerable to his Labour, to cheat his Master, provided he can do it without his privity ; That one Act of Faith and Love is sufficient for a man's whole Life ; And that Natural Attrition is enough in the Duty of Repentance. We hold not the Fertile Doctrines of Equivocations, good Intents, keeping no Faith with Hereticks, and that we may do evil that good may come of it. In short, we have no Jesuits Morals, no Doctrines of Probability, nor any Point maintained, but what is purely Religious, Christian, and Sacred : So that upon comparing the Principles of our Religion with those of the *Romish*, when one will appear suited to the strict Rules of the Gospel, the others are only raised up to serve the ends of Secular Policy, upon the Ruines of Morality, Society, and common Honesty. And indeed in this respect, the badness of their Cause may be to our good, and the great Preservative to keep us from Ruine. God Almighty perhaps sees, that he will not, as we say, mend the matter, by exalting them upon the Ruine of us ; nay, the Exchange will be to his

his own disadvantage ; and though he may gratifie his just Resentments , by cutting off so wicked a People, yet that may seem to derogate from his Wisdom and Holiness, when it tends to the Establishment of a much worse.

4. When the utter Ruine of a People would involve other Churches and Countries, that are perhaps more Innocent, in the same Miseries, then doth God's Holy Name seem concern'd to deliver them therefrom ; especially when a very considerable part of the World will be damag'd, and it may be that too where the purer Parts of the Church of Christ are. For here not only the Innocent will suffer for the Guilty, but Strangers miscarry for the faults of those whom they had no concern withal ; nay, greater Desolation will be caused in the Church of God, than is perhaps consistent either with his Providence over, or tender respect to it. And this we may suppose another Foundation of that Deliverance which we now commemorate. Not to Remark the Civil Broils which our Ruine must necessarily produce in other Countries, what can we think would become of the Protestant Interest throughout *Europe* upon our miscarriage ? We may well suppose that the Common Champion for the Catholick Cause will use his utmost Endeavours to make it as Universal as his Empire becomes, his

Conquests being but imperfect unless they make as great an Alteration in Religion as Government : And besides the utter Ruine of the purer Parts of the Visible Church, what Rapine, Blood, and Misery will needs be necessary in order to it ? The Cruelties shewed to his own Subjects are but a faint Essay of those Inhumane Barbarities that will be necessary in other Countries. What overthrowing Laws, destroying Constitutions ? Violating all the Bounds of Humanity and Justice ? How will Fire and Earth be mixed together ? No difference put betwixt Sacred and Profane ! And such a Confusion wrought in the best Parts of the World, as will but too sadly represent the first rude, indigested Chaos, or the last, great, general Conflagration. These things the Wisdom of Almighty God may perhaps fore-see will be the Consequences of our Ruine, and his Justice and Goodness seem concerned to prevent them. Hence hath his Almighty Arm appeared, already in a very great measure, to disappoint our Enemies, and to deliver us. The kindness he bears to the Publick Peace and Good of the World, will not suffer him to permit that which would draw such general Evils after it, and the Common Interest of Protestantism receiving its Fate from our Success or Miscarriage, stept in as an Advocate for our Preservation.

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These are some of those many Instances that might be produced wherein God's Holy Name may be concerned to deliver even a very sinful People from great Calamities.

From whence it appears, that no one can hence collect, that the Impunity of such bad People doth at all argue that he either bears them any Respect, or that he is backward in inflicting those Punishments upon them which they deserve : Alas, 'tis only out of pity to his Holy Name that they are preserved, and that because greater dishonour would redound to him by destroying than by saving them.

I shall conclude this Head, when I have added, that we must not either think that we are less beholding to God for our Deliverance, because it might not be wrought for our sakes, but for the sake of God's own Name ; or presume that we may yet sin with safety, seeing 'twill always be as much to the Interest of God's Name to preserve us.

For as to the former, 'tis well known that we for our sins sufficiently merited Destruction, and that if strict Justice had had its current, there would have been no escaping it. So that whatever Motives God might have on his part, there could be none on ours. And yet even on his part, though other considerations might concur, yet we all know that Mercy alone hath the most considerable ascendant over Justice in hindring its Execution. Or suppose it hath
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not, why should a Benefit be less valued, because in giving it the Donor hath some respect to his own Commodity as well as to his to whom 'tis given? All that we are to look to, is, at the Benefit we enjoy by the good turn another doth us, and the proportion of our Obligation is wholly taken from hence, and not from any collateral end he might propose to himself in doing of it: And I think no Malefactor looks upon himself less obliged to the Government in saving his Life, though it doth, at the same time, design to employ him in the Wars.

And then for the other, namely, our presuming to sin because it will be as much, as it hitherto has, the Interest of God's Name to preserve us from Ruine: This is, I say, as unreasonable as the other; and that not only because of the Ingratitude of it, as being an high Abuse of his Goodness, and turning his Grace into wantonness; but likewise for another, which is in this case a much weightier Reason, and that is

The uncertainty of the Rule in general. For tho' God Almighty in all his Actions doth consult the Honour of his Name, yet you must note, that he knows how more effectually to promote this, sometime by destroying than by saving a wicked People; in as much as in all such Eminent Acts of Justice he highly declares his Resentments of Sin, doth Justice upon Malefactors, and thereby makes himself
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feared in the World ; and tho' in such Punishments all the forementioned Instances, in which God's Holy Name seems concerned for their prevention, may happen, and yet are taken no notice of, yet he knows how to recompence himself for these by an hundred other things that he can cause to happen. Thus he at last dealt with these very *Israelites*, after he had delivered them from time to time, from one Danger and another, and saw that nothing would bring them to a thorow-Reformation, he utterly deprives them of their Native Country, City, and Temple ; and after a Slaughter of innumerable Thousands, makes them Vagrants upon the face of the Earth, without any settled place of abode. The same thing hath he since done to the *Asian* Churches, who, not observing the Cautions given them by St. *John*, are utterly wasted, and nothing but the Name of them at present continueth ; so that now *Seges ubi Troja fuit*, and where the True God was once worshipp'd, and Christianity flourish'd in the greatest splendour, nothing is to be found but the Mosques of Pagans, and *Mahomet's* Sacrifices alone obtain ; such Desolations do the abused Mercies and Goodness of God sometimes effect. Now, we are to observe, that amongst both these People the True Religion was once established, abundance of good People, there must undoubtedly be ; a far worse People and Religion too succeeded in their room, and

and a very great Breach, no doubt, was made by their Ruine upon the whole Church of Christ upon Earth, and yet we see what hath befallen them.

So that I say, tho' for his own Name-sake, God Almighty may sometimes see fit to spare a very wicked People, yet seeing he can bring Good out of Evil, and Light out of Darkness; can turn those Accidents that seem most against to be most for him, this is no safe Rule to be depended upon. He that can make the Deliverance of a People at one time turn to his Honour, can, at another time, make their Destruction contribute to the same End; and when his Patience is abused, the fore-mention'd Instances shew that he will take other Methods.

From what hath been said it appears, that the best Uses we can make of any Deliverances that God Almighty may have vouchsafed us, are not only to give the Glory of them to his Holy Name, but to use our Endeavours by Repentance and a sober Life, to continue this kindness of his to us. We cannot think that any thing but respect to his own Honour could ever put him upon appearing on the behalf of so wretched, so degenerate, and so profane a People. And blessed be his Holy Name, that it has interested it self for our safety; that instead of *giving us a Cup of Trembling, making us Magor Missabibs, Terrors to those that are round about us*, he has made us a Joy, and a Comfort to

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our Friends, a Terrour to our Enemies, and lifted us up above those that hated us. But let us not hereupon be *secure or high minded, but fear*; he that has raised us up, can for the self same reasons cast us down. If we continue our Uncharitableness, our furious Zeale, our causless Prejudice, our Murmurings, and the like; then I say the Interest of God's Name will be as much concerned to destroy, as it hath hitherto been to save us: In fine, Unless we Repent we shall yet sooner or later Perish, and what hath been hitherto done in order to our Settlement, shall but tend to make our Fall the more Observable, more Surprizing and Afflicting to us, and more Grateful to our Enemies. I now come to the Second Observation raised from the words, which is,

That the end or design of such Deliverances is, *Obs. 2.* That they who receive them should acknowledge the Being and Signal Providence of God to them therein; for the Prophet tells the *Israelites* in the Text, that they should know, that is, be convinced and fully satisfied, that God was the Lord, when notwithstanding their notorious Wickedness, he had Delivered them from their present Babylonish Captivity. So *v. 42.* of this Chapter, *And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the Land of Israel*; that is, my restoring you again to your Native Countrey, shall amply convince you of my Being and Providence.

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Seeing now that God doth expect this of us, with respect to all such Deliverances, it may be supposed that in effecting them, he leaves such Characters and Marks of his Hand and Providence, as are sufficient to convince all observing and unprejudiced People, that they are his doing. 'Twill be therefore necessary to enquire what these Characters and Marks are; that is, to observe some occurrents in the Deliverance of a Wicked People out of Adversity, as make it appear to be the Management and Handy-work of God. And here we are not to expect such Proofs as amount to a Demonstration; no, nor such either as shall actually convince those who have a mind to Cavil and search for Evasions. The former kind of Proofs belong to very few Articles that I know of, in the whole Body of Divinity, and as for the latter, they who have a Mind to be Captious, and are perhaps Dissatisfied about the whole Doctrine of Providence in General, will be never Convinced but by Arguments of Sense; and if by that, yet by nothing short of what is truly Miraculous: But 'twill be enough for my purpose, if there be such Occurrences sometimes happen, as are sufficient to convince all observing and sober-minded People, that they are indeed God Almighty's doing: Such are

1. When the Deliverance is Miraculous, that is, when 'tis effected either without or contrary to means,

means, or when the means that are used are utterly disproportionable to what they produce, so that tho they be improved to their utmost, yet without some other assistance, 'tis impossible but they should fall short of their end ; for seeing there is in the World nothing but God and Nature, whatever Contingencies happen must be produced by one of them : If therefore a thing fall out, that Nature had no concern in producing, or so little, that if left to its self, it could by no means effect it ; here's a plain Demonstration that God alone must be the sole Author of it in the former Sense, and the Principal in the latter.

Hence such Miraculous Occurrents have been ever esteemed an Infallible Argument, as well of the Existence as Providence of a Deity ; and where Men have seen an accident happen, either above the Power, without the Assistance, or contrary to the Course of Nature ; they have never scrupled to affirm, that the Hand of the Lord hath been remarkably in it. Where therefore any of these Circumstances attend the Deliverance of a Wicked People, they are so many *signacula*, Prints or Foot-steps of God's Handy-work and Providence.

Now tho we believe that such things are now ceased, so that whatever Deliverances happen in our days, means are always employ'd ; yet even in them there are sometimes such Marks of God's Influence

and Management, that none but the extreemly prejudiced and wilfully Blind can fail of Discerning them.

2. Such are when those very Men and Actions are the means and Instruments of it, which were designed for the exprefs contrary : I mean, when the Measures taken for our overthrow become the means of our Safety, and what was Designed to effect our Ruine, contributes to our Deliverance. For to bring this about 'tis plainly necessary, that something superior to what is against us do appear on our side. Now if all that Humane Power and Wisdom can do be engaged for our Ruine, a Power and Wisdom more then Humane must be Engaged to prevent it ; and what I pray, should this be but the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God, the weakness of whom is stronger, and the foolishness of whom is wiser then Men : At least suppose those that aim at the Ruine of a People, are by the urgency of Affairs necessitated to take some false steps, in the doing of which they may very probably spoile their Design ; yet who is it that puts them upon taking these impudent measures, but he that giveth such men up to *strong Delusions*, evacuating their Counsels, and frustrating their Designs ? Or Lastly, which (considering the state of things, is the more common case) suppose the Ruine of the Liberties or Religion of a People, be according to outward appearance

pearance unavoidable, so that to most Mens thinking there needs little to effect it besides a Potent Power, hardned Malice, unanimous Councels, and a vigorous Prosecution ; where all these things concur, and yet the affair not only miscarry, but with the utter Ruine too of the Contrivers, who can want sense to perceive the Finger of the Lord in all this, especially considering what the *Psalmist* tells us, *That it is he who takes the wicked in the work of their own hands*, that he brings it to pass, that *his wickedness shall fall on his own head*, and *his violent dealings on his own pate*, and Lastly, that *he makes himself known by the Judgments he executes in so doing*.

3. When the Means concerned in effecting the Deliverance are no ways proportionable to the Difficulties they conquer, either with respect to the open Enemies they are to subdue, or to the inward Distractions of that People for whom 'tis procur'd; that is to say, when those very People that are delivered, are not only prepossessed against the Deliverance it self, and the means used in procuring it, but likewise have an open Force engaged for their Ruine, much stronger than those who appear for their Safety ; this is, I say, another mark of God's doing and Providence : For if we consider the two Bodies of outward Force separately by themselves, that is, one rising against, and the other in behalf
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of a People, Reason and common Experience tells us, that, where for Conduct, Valour, and the like, they are equal, that the stronger side should get the Victory; especially, where they are double or triple the Number, it cannot be deny'd: And therefore in the Instances we have in Scripture, of a lesser Force conquering a greater, 'tis always attributed to the Providence of God, who is sure to bring Success to that side he doth espouse. Much more when the People, upon whose account the Contest is undertaken, are not only prejudiced against their Deliverers, but against their Design too; then, I say, their Deliverance seems so far from being probable, that their utter Ruine seems unavoidable, and that because this will not only discourage those who have taken Arms in their Quarrel, but very much dispose them to Differences among themselves; either of which must needs prove fatal to them. So that for such a People in such Circumstances, and by such Means to be delivered, must needs afford an ample Proof of God's doing and Providence.

I might to these add some other Instances of God's Providence in matters of this Nature; as where the Deliverance is seasonable, coming in that very nick of time in which it was most wanted, and yet far from being expected, like the Deliverance of the *Jews* in the days of *Queen Esther*, that when *Haman's* Designs were ripe for Execution, and the People

ple expected nothing but to fall a Sacrifice to his Malice, that God Almighty should appear in the critical Minute for their unexped Safety and Preservation. But I think we need neither this, nor any others. What our Saviour said of the *Jews*, that if they would not regard the ordinary means of *Moses and the Prophets*, the more extraordinary and Miraculous of *one coming from the Dead*, would not convince them, may be said here; that a Miraculous Deliverance would hardly convince such People of its being done by God, whom such wonderful, tho' but ordinary appearances as these will not satisfy. I think I need not scruple to say, that though the Judgments of God are sometimes a great Deep, and his ways very unsearchable, yet in these and such like, they are so manifest, that he that runs may read them. As 'tis *God who Rules in the Armies of Men*, pulls down one, and sets up another, disposes of States and Kingdoms as pleaseth him; and in fine, to make himself known, sometimes delivers a wicked People out of Extremity; so are we fully perswaded, that he need not give greater Evidence of his doing and handy-work, than these here produced. In requiring therefore those who receive them, to own and acknowledge him therein, is no unreasonable Demand; on the contrary, 'tis highly Rational, that when he so Remarkably signalizeth himself, that he should be observed and taken notice of: For seeing
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they receive the benefit of it, why should they not acknowledge its Author? Especially when God Almighty doth so much insist upon it, giving them to understand, that one of his main Ends is wholly lost, where his Hand and Counsel are not taken notice of. I shall therefore endeavour to press this upon you in two words, and so conclude.

1. And first, doth God Almighty make such large Discoveries of his Being and Providence in some Publick Deliverances even of wicked People? Then let our Faith be hereby more strongly confirmed in the general belief of that his Being and Providence; that is, let us fully conclude not only that there is a God, but that he does likewise Rule and Reign in the World, when we observe instances of such Deliverances as these are. We see 'tis this that God Almighty doth particularly aim at in effecting them; and when the *Israelites* Faith in these Articles hath begun to flag and grow weak, immediately God hath set himself to work some such grand occurrent, and thereby hath repaired and strengthened it: And I can by no means see why the same things should not have the same effects on us; that is, why Deliverances that have been wrought for us should not amply confirm our belief both that God is, and that he governs the World! perhaps the reason may be, that there is not so much of Miracle in our Deliverances as there sometimes was in theirs; or that God Almighty

Almighty doth not by an inspired Prophet, or an Angel from Heaven tell us, that he will bring about such a Deliverance for us, at such a time, in such a manner, and by such Instruments, as he sometimes told the *Jews* he would. But are there no instances of God's Handy-work but such as are Miraculous? Or can he be concerned in no occurrent, because he doth not tell us by an Angel's Mouth that he is so? Are there not rather rational Evidences of his Providence, which tho' not Miraculous, yet such as are very convincing and satisfactory that God's Hand and Counsel is therein? One would almost conclude that there were no such Evidences, when he reflects upon the intolerable Atheism and Infidelity of the present Age, with respect to all such Occurrences: Instead of Religion's gaining Ground hereby, Irreligion and Profaneness have abundantly increased; and where such things have been done as could be the contrivance of none, but of an All-Wise, Just, and Merciful God, Men have taken occasion even from hence to become meer Scepticks and Atheists as to his Being and Providence. In this I particularly refer to the late Revolution, since which, if my Observations fail not, Atheism and Irreligion have made a more considerable advance than ordinary; and, which one would think something strange, but yet 'tis what I have observed with some Resentment and Conserve, that such Atheistical Notions and Practises

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have taken Foundation even from that very Revolution. If these did only arise in some tender, tho' weak Christians, from their reflecting upon the great Wickedness of the Nation, and from thence taking Offence at the Deliverance, something might be said in order to reclaim them; and one need but shew that sometime the Holy Name, Honour, and Glory of God, may be concerned for the Deliverance even of such a wicked People, and the fore-mentioned Scandal must needs cease. But alas, their Atheism and Irreligion are founded upon other Topicks, and are most Rampant in a quite different sort of Men: But this I can only at present lament and bewail.

2. Seeing God's Hand and Counsel hath so Remarkably appeared in the late Deliverance of our King and Country, let us be perswaded particularly to own and acknowledge him therein. If we perform not this Duty, and that with hearty seriousness and concern too, we make the worst abuse of it imaginable, because our owning of it was, as appears by the Text, the great thing that gave Foundation to the Deliverance: Besides we hereby lose the greatest part of the Benefit we might enjoy by the Deliverance, and that is a confirmation of the Goodness and Blessing of God upon our selves and Country. For such as these God Almighty may work one Deliverance after another, and have
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nought for his Requital, but Silence and Ingratitude. He may free them from the worst of Miseries, and instate them in the quiet Enjoyment of the greatest Blessings, and yet be conn'd no Thanks for his Labour. And give me leave to add, that 'tis a sad thing to observe how many we have of these even amongst our selves. Though our Deliverance fall short of none, and hath all the fore-mentioned Characters in it of God's Handy-work, yet how few are there who own and acknowledge it? Some from a wonted Blindness, and never looking farther than the meer surface of things; others from not considering the Circumstances of it with Intensiveness and Application of Mind; a third sort from an Opinion they have imbibed of God's unconcernedness with the World, and leaving all to second Causes; and another sort I fear there are, who from a Prejudice and Disaffection to the thing it self, look upon it as the doing of the *Manichee's* Evil God, who is the Author of all Wickedness and Confusion, rather than of him who doth nothing but what is truly good. In short, some from one ground, and some from another, take so little notice of God's Hand and Influence therein, that they seem little or nothing to regard it. And thus, like *Israel* of Old, God doth great things for us, and we observe them not: And did not the Government (by Religiously appointing days of Fasting on the one hand, and of

Thanksgiving on the other) declare its Sentiments in the matter, namely, that *it was the Lord's doing*, I know not how we should avoid the National Guilt of not answering the End which God tells us he aims at therein; that is, *that we should know that he is the Lord*. However for our part, seeing we have so good an Example and Authority too for our Acknowledgment of his Providence therein, let us not fail to imitate it: And seeing our owning this, is not the All that is expected from us, but a suitable Praise, Thanksgiving, and Gratitude, let us not be deficient in them neither. Now we know our Deliverer let us be Thankful to him, and suitable to the Benefits we enjoy by the Deliverance, so let our Acknowledgments be; then will God Almighty return to us, and that it may be, with an increase of Blessings: Then will he render our Fleets Prosperous, and our Armies Successful; then will he put an end to the sad and deplorable War abroad, and compose our unhappy Differences at home: And lastly, then will he Preserve to us our Gracious Sovereigns, and with them our Religion, and all that is dear; and in so doing will purchase to himself from all good Protestants, and all true *English-Men*, all Honour, Glory, Power, and Praise Everlasting.

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